

FRONTISPIECE



Mental Improvement

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Mental Improvement

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MENTAL IMPROVEMENT

FOR

~~05407 de 43~~
YOUNG LADY,

ON HER

ENTRANCE into the WORLD;

ADDRESSED TO

A FAVOURITE NIECE.

A NEW EDITION.

L O N D O N :
PRINTED FOR WILLIAM LANE,

AT THE
Minerva-Press,
LEADENHALL-STREET.
M, DCC, XCIV.

[Handwritten signature]



DEDICATION.

TO THE HONOURABLE

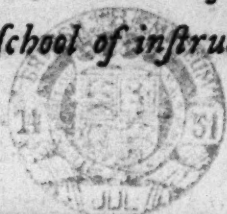
MISS * * * * *

MY DEAR CHARLOTTE,

ACCEPT from one, who entertains
for you the most sincere and tender re-
gard, a few sheets, the work of little
labour, and less leisure: I say little la-
bour, for all the welfare I wish you flows
spontaneously from my pen, and, though

still less the hours of ease and quiet I enjoy, from my situation in life, yet I cannot employ them better than in dedicating them to your instruction and improvement.

I will imagine you, on the commencement of this my present work, arrived at the age of sixteen; an age, when most young Ladies have gone through the various branches of their education, and are making their entrance on that great theatre, the world, which, though often a dangerous, is, nevertheless, sometimes a very useful school of instruction.



Till

Till you are arrived at that period, I offer it to the public, and if any of the rising generation profit by it, I am amply repaid. Blest with such parents as you now are, all admonition from another may be set aside. You have a mother, who makes her duty her delight; who, though descended from the most ancient nobility, thinks it not beneath her to unite with every elegant accomplishment, the amiable and endearing duties of a virtuous wife and mother.

Without the aid of hypocrisy, or the mistaken zeal of fanaticism your father has the true piety of a Christian, and the fervent charity of a man: Though he

wishes to see virtue abound, yet he considers himself not as a scourge sent from the hands of that Providence, to whom "vengeance alone belongeth," he therefore sees, with an eye of pity, the failings of all.

My instructions then may appear unnecessary: But why so? Heaven, in its inscrutable ways, may deprive you of one, perhaps both, your worthy parents; and the spur of admonition, from a faithful friend, may stimulate you to those actions, which may draw you near to that state of perfection, which, though we can never entirely attain in this life, we may so fit ourselves

ourselves for, as to have a foretaste of that happiness here, which will be the lot of all the good hereafter.

Here then, my dear Charlotte, my advice, for it is sincere from the love I bear you; from the sisterly affection I feel for your dear father, I wish to behold his offspring the pattern of virtue and elegance, the ornament of her sex. The qualifications of the heart, though education cannot give them, yet education will refine and amend; neither are we able, at the early period of life, when we study those advantages so to govern those sallies
of

of our temper, as by the time-gained reflection of a few years.

I will, therefore, imagine you possessed of all those external accomplishments, which your birth and connexions will entitle you to, and begin with those mental qualifications, which can alone render you amiable; and that you may be truly so, is the most fervent wish of,

My dear niece,

Your most sincere,

And most affectionate

Friend.

P R E F A C E,
ADDRESSED TO THE
S U P E R I O R S
OF THE VARIOUS
S E M I N A R I E S
FOR
FEMALE EDUCATION.

*T*O you, who must be looked upon as the pillars of female erudition, can I do better than dedicate this little plan, intended at first for the private instruction of one dear child? yet, from the persuasions of friends,

friends, have made it public, being so induced, the rising generation, under your directions, may, perhaps, find some little benefit from it; if ever so trifling, I shall think my labours crowned with success.

Under your immediate eye, this little work may be brought into actual life in some of the young plants committed to your fostering care. Ye, who watch the tender shoot, and the just opening bud, may see, by degrees, the beautiful flower nearly attaining perfection, when ye restore it to the hands of a tender mother, with conscious joy, that it is you who have reared it to perfection.

Can

Can any one feel more gratitude than a mother, blest with such a daughter, as formed by nature, and polished by you? for it is you, who, by public education, inspire that emulation, which a private tuition never can give: The natural languor of the very best understandings want a spur to stimulate to the pursuit and practice of all useful acquisitions. The necessary love of order you inculcate, serves to render them ever ready to act with propriety, and pursue those accomplishments from example and habit.

To those who, from your hands, launch into the gay scenes of a polite metropolis,

or whose lot is cast for the domestic scenes of elegant retirement, I devote these pages; and often from the loss of parents, a respected guardian places a young Lady under your care, to perform the sacred duties of a mother, and to give the finishing polish to beauty and elegance.

I trust, that, if she will form her conduct by the rules prescribed in this little work, she will acquit herself in such a manner, as to gain the respect and affection of all around her, and receive, that best of all praises, the plaudits of an unspotted mind.

These

These genuine effusions of a pen, unused to the arts of flattery, and despising all fulsome adulation so common in prefatory letters, are submitted to the candid eye of those, who so well know how to give female worth its highest excellence, to open and enlarge the contracted mind to the noblest feelings of liberality, and by well-tempered tenderness, and proper government, relaxing ill-judged severity, and forgiving, with maternal feelings, every fault, but the vices of falsehood and obstinacy; you gain the next place in their hearts to that of their honoured parents, and thus the happiness you communicate to others

B

returns

returns with ten-fold blessings on yourselves.

Under the opinion that this work will be of utility, I send it into the world; and to the approbation of minds formed upon its just principals, it is respectfully submitted by the

AUTHOR.



MENTAL IMPROVEMENT.

LETTER I.

GOOD TEMPER.

MY DEAREST NIECE,

MY sincere wish to see you possessed of every virtue that can make you an ornament to your friends and to society, encourages me to hope that all I may here say, will never be regarded with petulance or neglect; but read with attention, and be considered as meant wholly for your good.

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My writings were never shackled with grammatical rules, or the fetters of deep erudition: I have suffered my sentiments to flow from my pen, totally regardless of the critic's frown, or the sneer of paltry envy: As such, you will find my instructions as they come uppermost in my mind; yet there must be a ground-work, a leading rule, to form the character of an amiable and engaging woman.

It must proceed from a good temper; a good temper, that is to say, a good heart, for they are synonymous terms, is the foundation of every thing

thing in woman that is great and good. Ever cherish that opinion that belieyes well of your neighbour, especially if she is slandered, and banish far from your mind that want of charity, which amiable quality, if we do not possess, we are taught to believe all our other good works are worth nothing.

Avoid all acrimony: How disgusting in a female, who ought to be all gentleness and sweetness. She who possesses it, little imagines how very much she disgusts. Read the opinion of one who knew your sex well, who studied them from his youth—the late

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Lord Chesterfield: He describes an accomplished and virtuous woman; among many amiable qualities which he enumerates, he dwells chiefly on this: "When scandal is busy, and
" the fame of her neighbour is tossed
" from tongue to tongue, if charity
" and good-nature open not her
" mouth, the finger of silence resteth
" on her lip."

In the trying hour of adversity let all wrongs be forgot; and never lend a twig to kindle a fire, to offer up an unhappy victim; if in their day of prosperity they have injured you, yet
are

are we not all fallible? Who can lay his hand on his heart and say, I have never done amiss? If then you see them stretched on the bed of sickness, or languishing in the horrors of confinement, how generous that forgiveness and relief that comes from an injured person. This, my dear Charlotte, is that generosity I wish you to possess. This is better than the mistaken liberality of squandering millions precariously on, perhaps, the undeserving; at least, all cannot be deserving objects that implore our assistance. Benevolence is a virtue belonging to our sex, and you always see

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see the image of charity in the figure and form of a woman.

Govern well your temper from all the stormy passions, and let it never become their prey; they will deform your whole countenance, and render the pretty face you have received from nature disgusting to behold; while the smile of complacency, and the mild look of benevolence, will light up your countenance with a degree of animation which will render it truly beautiful. I believe, my dear, the caution was almost unnecessary to you, to keep your temper unruffled by

by passion. You appear to be blest with a calm and patient disposition, and your worthy mother, by taking care not to spoil you, early instilled into you that content under disappointments, and that gentle forbearance, which were likely to let you taste that tranquillity in your own breast, which the world is not capable of bestowing; but I reflect, I write not these sheets for you alone; some, perhaps, willing to have the philosophy of conquering their passions, yet in the habit of indulging them, from being deprived of parents, and left only to the care of sycophants, may happen to peruse this work, and,

and, perhaps, let not my vanity meet with censure, have cause to thank the other.

A liveliness of temper, when it does not degenerate into levity, is the sure sign of a good heart. You, my dear girl, are blest with charming spirits, and I may venture to say, they are with you the result of health, and unsullied innocence: May they never be depressed, except from those generous feelings of the soul which grieve to behold those wounds they cannot administer the balm of comfort into: But when the scene is all gaiety and brightness around you, enjoy

enjoy it. Why should youth be serious? The time will come, you must be so; it will be both proper and becoming.—When I see a young person serious without cause, I immediately set her down, in my opinion, as either pondering something unamiable—not to say bad—or something she has committed which she is afraid should be discovered. Should a young person then be without thought, or reflection! Surely no: But let her chuse the moments of retirement for it; not in the scene of company and gaiety let her set gravely absorbed in contemplation; or when she does speak, uttering serious sentences;
but

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but endeavouring to amuse with the cheerfulness of innocence, or listening to others with sweet, smiling attention: Yet, while I caution you against this gloomy gravity above-mentioned, be very careful not to rush into the contrary extreme of levity, still more dangerous than the former; it betrays a young woman into every species of folly, and seldom does she, who possesses it, keep clear from vice: As levity is mostly accompanied by wit, her own sex avoid and shun her, while the other mark her for their prey; nor has she any resources in her own mind; ever on the rack to find out new scenes of amusement,

2

MENTAL IMPROVEMENT. II

amusement, or subjects of ridicule, she flies to scenes of dissipation, and becomes an object of disgust to all.

Far be it from me, while I am cautioning you against any species of uncharitableness, to say that women, possessed of levity, are without virtue. Many have been the instances to the contrary, yet, certain it is, few have possessed this dangerous quality, that have not lost their reputation. A man, embarrassed in his circumstances, hires a large house, he insures the goods to a great amount, his house is burnt, and he is suspected of being the incendiary, although, perhaps, as innocent as our-

selves. Thus the guiltless votaries of levity ensure their reputation from the consciousness of their own innocence; but the ill-natured world will not pay the debt, but often brand them with the worst of appellations.

You will read, my dear child, when perusing history, the sufferings of the unfortunate Mary Stuart, the beautiful queen of Scotland; yet all her faults were a temper much too easy, and an unfortunate levity, which her natural sincerity could not teach her to disguise; yet, though a queen, once almost idolized and caressed by all, she did not
escape

escape the charges of murder and adultery! Nor did even her innocence save her from a premature death. Tremble at, and beware of, the consequences of imprudence.—The implacable MALICE of her enemies reminds me of cautioning you against inheriting one spark of that vice, the very worst that can take possession of a female breast; cast it from you as a scorpion; let it never approach you. If any one has done you a material injury, and you find passion rising to his prejudice, and begin to utter—I wish——Oh! let the malevolent wish remain unfinished, and rather say,—“Father, forgive.” Thus did

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the blessed Founder of our true religion; He was meek and forgiving to all; and if you regulate your heart and affections, and endeavour to preserve that equanimity of temper I wish, you will be enabled to follow his steps, and to walk in the ways of righteousness.

LETTER

LETTER II.

CONDUCT AND CONVERSATION.

MY DEAR NIECE,

NEXT to a good temper the first things to be considered, are those external graces, which, though they are thought but of little avail with some serious people, are, nevertheless, of the greatest consequence towards your making a figure in life.

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Nature has endowed you with a graceful person, and a countenance little short of beauty. You have escaped the small-pox, that cruel spoiler of a pretty face, and your health is such, at present, as to promise no diminution of your personal attractions.

There is nothing in all this to make you vain; it is no merit of your own, and if I do not tell it you, perhaps it will be told you by fifty flattering fops in one week; but will they make it a lesson of instruction to you? Will they tell you it will soon fade? Nay, that it does fade hourly? Will they tell you that he who gave it you, may deprive you
of

of it by some dreadful casualty, in the short space of one day? No; they idolize you for it, as if it was your own procuring; and, if you was not a very sensible girl, you might, perhaps, be silly enough to believe them.

Be elegant in all things. A pretty woman, without elegance, may please for a short time, but her beauty is seen at once, and charms no more; while a woman, with nothing remarkable in either her face or person, will, by the elegances of her discourse and action, often attract all the attention, while many beauties sit by wholly neglected.

In

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In what, you will say, do these elegances consist, and how are they to be acquired; Their first leading principle is attention. To such a height of polish are we arrived, that the originality of things is almost lost, and what follows is but an improvement of imitation: Study then, and be attentive to the manners of that Lady, in company, who you see has the most elegance, and you will insensibly acquire her manners; and, in fact, attention is, in itself, one of the graces. There is in attention an unassuming politeness, which charms every one: To whom, in general, do you see persons address their discourse,

but

but to her who is most attentive? Never lose the thread of a story which is relating; this argues an inattention, and to you an ill-breeding, which no future good behaviour can atone for.

Other little attentions in young people, to those advanced in years, are extremely grateful and pleasing.—When you was a little child, I have seen the Dutchess of —, your grandmother, drop her book, and you have picked it up for her. You are not less attentive now, I hope: I am sure you met with encouragement.—These things, though trifles in themselves, charm an elderly person

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person very much. An old Lady, perhaps, wishes for a manuscript Poem, which is handed about in company. You offer to write it for her. Such little attentions cost you nothing, but gain you more applause than you can possible imagine,

A strict carefulness not to offend should next be considered. A gay young person, in the height of mirth, often says things she sorely repents after, at least if she hath any feeling or sentiment. In the various people you visit, nay, even in your own family, there are a mixture of characters. Endeavour
politely

politely to accommodate yourself to all, as far as is compatible with the principles of virtue and prudence you have been taught.

At visits and card parties you often meet with people you have never seen before, and, perhaps, never may again; therefore be cautious of railing at any particular class, country, or sect of people. Perhaps you address yourself to an American, and say you never could endure the people of his country; to a Roman Catholic, and call the people of the church of Rome bigots and idolaters: These speeches inflict a kind of stab

stab against the parties, and leave a thorn in your own breast when you have discovered your folly, that you know not how to eradicate. Forgive me if I here digress to remark a little, that uncharitableness, which we are all too much apt to give way to. Without studying the graces, never indulge yourself, my dear niece, in disliking this man because he is a soldier, another because he is a sailor, another because he is a lawyer, for be assured there are very honest, worthy men amongst them all, even of the latter description. In every society, in every country, there are, and ever will be, a mixture of good and bad. England is
 very

very small; let not our minds be so too. Look on a globe, you have learned geography, and see how trifling an appearance it makes: Let us then not reflect so shamefully on human nature, as to imagine, that where countries are large, goodness also does not flourish and abound. Albion, it is true, is peculiarly blest! it is the seat of true religion, and is mistress of every great and elegant art; and, above all, its Governor is the most virtuous of princes: But shall this reflection fill our hearts with pride, and make us despise and think lightly of others? No, my dear Charlotte, there is the same

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Protec-

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Protector over every nation, to inform, and lead their minds to every virtue. Let the same benevolent principle of charity lead you to behold with pity, instead of contempt, those who are unfortunately attached to any false religion. If they are good and virtuous, a merciful God will not punish them for believing in that falshood they did not invent, and which they think themselves bound to believe as much as we do our true religion. Render thanks to Heaven you have been instructed in it, and pray for the conversion of others, but never attempt it; you will only leave their minds, perhaps, involved

volved in a state of doubt, terror and anxiety, they knew not before: Rather let your own good example make them desirous of embracing your opinion, by their thinking there must be something peculiarly good in a religion inspiring so much virtue. I have dwelt on this subject longer than I intended; but on such a theme it is better to say too much than too little.

To obtain elegance, a strict attention to carriage is absolutely requisite; though, by an upright gesture, you should not lose an inch of that height nature has given you, yet nothing is so

disagreeable as that precise stiffness, some young Ladies have, of holding themselves, from the dread of being thought to stoop. Your dancing master, in his first lessons to you, incessantly cried out, "Your head upright, "your body straight;" that was to be considered; but by the variety of motion in your different dances, he taught you, that graceful ease alone was elegance; and from the happy acquirements and accomplishments you have gained, united with attention, you will be enabled to fold up a letter, I might even say, stir the fire with more elegance,

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gance, than some young Ladies would walk a minuet.

Study well the character of those you visit, and form your conversation equal to their taste. If they delight in the topic of fashion, know how to discuss the important subject of a new-fashioned bonnet, or fan, and remember the birth-day suit that was most admired; but in whatever company you are, never let a word of scandal escape your lips; even those who love scandal will, in the end, admire you for your sweet forbearance; and, above all things, read over the new publications, however

trifling, if they are not bad (against those dangerous productions I will caution you in some future letter.) In some companies literary works are the chief topic, and it argues a dislike of reading in a young person not to be acquainted with them. Happy may you think yourself among some of your choice friends, and worthy relations, where your conversation dwells on the delightful themes of morality, virtue, and literature. While they know how to trifle agreeably, unbend the serious moments, and practise the true art of pleasing: How from the flutterers of the present day will you fly, charmed
and

and delighted, to their society, and bless the hour that gave and allied you to them!

Cards are very much, indeed, too much, the fashion; but, though I caution you against gaming, and declare it to be the worst inmate in a female breast, yet it is highly necessary for a young Lady to be acquainted with all the different games, and indeed, to render herself mistress of them; but I would never advise you to engage in them, unless you cannot avoid it. Your fortune is not large, therefore you cannot afford to lose your money;

If

If you do lose it at the card table, you must retrench some of your expences; for never think of retrieving it again by winning, that is the true spirit of gaming, and has often been attended with the most fatal consequences to either sex: No, if you lose, you must be content to go without, perhaps, a new gown you had promised yourself the succeeding summer, or postpone the expence of some agreeable recreation. If you win, resolve that the gain shall be given to some distressed object, and by these means make to yourself friends of the mammon of "unrighteousness," for cards may certainly come under

under that denomination; they are a shameful waste of time, a bar to every young person's advantage, and, from the late hours that are generally employed in their pursuit, a cruel attack on the health.

Be sure to avoid all egotism; that will never make you either graceful, or your company desirable. We seldom speak well of those people who are continually setting forth their own praise. If you have merit, depend upon it, it will be known; for if it is not given you by those who know how to admire and applaud it in others, the
breath

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breath of envy will spread it abroad from the height of her vexation.

Fancy, when she displays herself in dress, may be deemed a great acquisition. In vain shall your attire be elegant, if you have not taste in the putting it on; a bunch of flowers, or a plume of feathers, may be made either tawdry and glaring, or simple and elegant, merely from the taste and manner in which they are disposed; and I have seen a *bandeau* put a cross the hair, in such a way as to look frightful, and at other times to appear the most simple, agreeable head-dress in the world.

Such

Such are the effects of an elegant taste and fancy; but avoid all finery, and let your dress in general be plain, fashionable and neat, for not to follow fashion shews a kind of obstinacy, and there is more vanity and self-conceit, in keeping out of the mode, than in being the first to follow it; it is a tacit declaration that you know better than other people. Fashionable phrases are also of more consequence, than many people imagine, and the new pronunciation of words you should be careful to obtain, as they are the result of our daily national improvements; and you may do all this, if you will be elegant, with
the

the ease of a fashionable Lady, and not with the formality of a female pedant.

Be humble; carefully shun all haughtiness of deportment; behave to your inferiors with gentleness and tenderness; and never invite an humble friend to your table, and make her feel her dependence. Let your own opinion always bow to that of the learned and the aged; they are not always right; yet be silent, even when you are so, if they are of contrary sentiments, and avoid all contradiction, for it is the greatest impoliteness you can be guilty

of; yet never fear to hazard an opinion, but maintain it with decency.

In little works of skill and ingenuity, our sex are allowed to excel.—Pray do not you be ignorant of them, and make little presents of card purses, and of your paintings, &c. to your different friends; all such little attentions will make you a very desirable acquaintance, and gain you the agreeable appellation of a very pleasing, obliging young Lady; and by these employments, and that of practising the different branches of your education, your morning hours will never hang

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idle

idle on your hands. Never lounge or loll in company; it is a masculine deportment which fits very ill on any Lady. Loud laughter too, I hope I need not caution you against: it evinces a futile mind, and a great want of delicacy. Long stories you will find very tiresome to the hearer, and, indeed, I would caution you against any species of story telling, unless it is something very short, extremely applicable and entertaining. Few tell a story well; few humour it sufficiently, and this is one of those graces which cannot be acquired, for imitation in these sort of things disgusts: Neither
can

can you gain it by imitation; it must be one of the gifts of nature, and of which I do not think you are possessed; for, when a child, you was some time before you could articulate well, and a very excellent articulation is necessary towards telling a story. It is very mortifying for a hearer to say, perhaps, at the most pointed part of your narrative, "What was that? I did not understand you." The stroke of wit, then, by being repeated a second time, loses its relish, and, instead of laughter, a forced, vacant smile, sits on the countenance of your auditors.

Though a pertinent question, properly asked, and in proper place, is very well, and shews an assuming diffidence in a girl, yet, if you ask questions too often, you will be deemed impertinent and troublesome;—therefore put them but seldom, and be sure do not ask them, but where you are ignorant, and wish for information; and I hope your instructions have been such, and you have so profited by them, that you will not have occasion to ask them often; and, tho' your questions may appear trifling, and other people may have the rudeness to say, “ Bless
 “ me! did not you know the meaning
 “ of

"of that?" be not dishearted. She who is afraid of confessing her own ignorance, will never be otherwise than ignorant.

Cultivate well your natural talent of singing by all means; vocal music, in one sense, is much more desirable than instrumental; one is acquired, the other is a native accomplishment; but never hum a tune, unless alone; never among your intimate friends; it is rude, and appears as if you wished to be asked to shew your skill. Ever wear on your countenance a gracious smile, unless you are discussing, or conversing

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on serious subjects; and then, I hope, the sensations of a heart, naturally good will banish a smile from your face, for nothing is more graceful than

“ The virtuous tear that springs for others' woe.”

Solidity of judgment, and depth of reasoning, we do not yet expect from you; but tenderness of heart will display itself even in an infant. Talk not too much, or too little; she who does the latter, will never be an entertaining companion. A pleasant prattler will ever be so, and banish many an uneasy thought; and her acquaintance,
on

on that account, be eagerly sought after; on the other hand, beware of troublesome loquacity.

Villifying expressions ought never to enter a female's thoughts, much less escape her lips. I never even would use myself, if I were you, to utter the expression of, "He is a shocking *fellow*;" and yet I have heard some Ladies, who are reckoned women of good breeding, who have called a man a *scoundrel*, a *rascal*, and a woman a *vile buffy*! Be not you like them.

Women should carefully avoid every thing that has the least tendency to masculine. Weak and helpless in herself, she seeks from man protection and advice; but she cannot expect he will ever afford it her, if she usurps his province. Wisdom is her's, as well as his; but he holds it with more solid force: Conscious of his superiority in this, he displays it in the senate, in the pulpit, and at the bar; while woman, veiling her's with modesty and diffidence, gains fresh instructions from his wise counsels, and by such means only finds in him a friend and constant defender.

Youth

Youth is the season in which every thing wears a pleasing aspect, in which no clouds appear threatening to rise, and when admonition appears sometimes troublesome. You see, my dear niece, I wish you to enjoy the delightful spring while it lasts; but I would have you also consider, that the accomplishments I have mentioned in this letter are, for the most part, only external. My next letters shall contain advice for following the virtues, and deprecating the vices and foibles of the mind, which if you do not, all the outward graces of elegance and worldly accomplishments can be of no avail;

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nor will they afford you one hour's consolation when age marks you his victim, and the pleasures of this world have past by as a shadow.

LETTER

LETTER III.

FORBEARANCE.

MY DEAREST NIECE,

AS your temporal and eternal welfare is ever nearest my heart, I wish to make every thing a lesson of instruction to you, and this is the cause of the taciturnity which is by no means natural to me, that has lately been remarked by my friends.

You remember where we past the evening last Thursday, and I was pleased to see you appear shocked and disconcerted, at the ANGER of the Lady, who sat next you, on the neglect of her partner in causing her to lose her game.

Whenever you feel a disposition to indulge this rancorous passion, think of what you then felt; and, though you may have more cause than from the trifling loss of a game at cards to be angry, yet endeavour to gain that noble philosophy, and Christian fortitude,

tude, as to banish the hateful vice from your breast.

“ Anger resteth only in the bosom
 “ of fools,” said the wise Solomon;
 He might have said in the bosom of
 the wicked, for he will not “ tax a fool
 “ for his folly.” Passion, it is true,
 may tempt us to be angry for a mo-
 ment, that we cannot help; a woman
 wholly without passion is generally
 without sentiment, or of a gloomy,
 sulky, disposition, than which nothing
 can be more dreadful; but, if you
 do not check your anger, if you suf-
 fer it to repose in your breast, and

F.

look.

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look again on the person who has offended you with rancour, and, perhaps, they have affronted you unwittingly, it is a proof of a very bad and unforgiving temper.

Let me entreat of you, my dear niece, carefully then to avoid every species of anger. The angry person is never happy, always restless, dissatisfied, and uneasy; they carry about them a sting, with which they seek to wound their adversary; but which returns to themselves more sharp, and pierces deeper than before.

Forgive

“ Forgive, and ye shall be forgiven !”

When you address the Throne of Mercy with the prayer that was taught you, by one, who, in the most trying hour, felt not one spark of this bitter flame, think what you are about to say, and reflect before you utter it, if there is any person with whom you are not at peace.

In the state of the primitive church, (indeed, the rule stands so now; only those things are too apt to be neglected) no two persons were allowed to communicate together, if there subsisted

between them any angry grudge; for it is certainly an insult to the Majesty of Heaven to kneel before his Altar, and say, "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive, &c." if we do not so in our hearts.

Forgiveness is the most noble of all the Christian virtues, and tho' from a very trifling thing I have taken this important lesson, yet, when I reflect that all her actions are but a series of trifling, I shall be happy, at any future opportunity, of drawing instruction for you to profit thereby. Act in this,

as in every thing else, as you would have others do by you; and, were I to write a volume, I could not say more on the subject.

LETTER IV.

CHASTITY.

MY DEAR NIECE,

I SHALL, perhaps, fall under some censure for addressing so young a Lady as yourself, on the important subject which I have reserved for this letter: It is Chastity!—the highest virtue your sex can possess, and she who has it not is generally despised by every one.

AH

All the best writers are of opinion, and all the best judges of human-kind agree with them, that chastity in a woman is as essential as courage in a man; it adds new charms to beauty, embellishes the whole conversation and deportment, and gives a lustre to all our other virtues. Whose adventures and histories give you most delight and satisfaction in the perusal, those of the wanton Cleopatra, in all the luxury of Egyptian magnificence sailing down the Cydnus, or the chaste Lucretia preferring death to infamy, and the innocent Eirginia bleeding on the block?

These

These were Romans, unacquainted with that purity of manners we are taught; and shall Christians do less? They were pure and virtuous from principle and inclination: Let us blush then at the idea of wandering out of that excellent track they have trod before us, when we are taught to expect a glorious reward, even for doing no more than our duty.

If you are not strictly modest in your deportment, you will never be denominated chaste. Let not your looks betray a consciousness of your knowledge of, or smile at a *double entendre*; but

but look not prudishly grave: Such behaviour incline the men to imagine you more knowing than you ought to be; rather appear as if you did not hear them, at least that you do not understand them. Despise all kind of coquetry, for the truly chaste person is never a coquette. As I said before, in treating of levity, I do not dispute but that a coquette may be a very virtuous woman; but she does not hold chastity in that veneration she ought.

Read often the examples of chastity you will find in history, and let them

them stimulate you faithfully to copy the bright originals. Virtue will ever meet its reward, even on earth. Elizabeth Woodville, from her noble resolution of maintaining her chastity, even against a king every way seducing, though she came to him petitioning for her children, yet, when he made her proposals inconsistent with her honour to accept, she nobly refused them, and, trusting to that Providence which she knew "would feed the young ravens which called upon him," she was raised to the summit of greatness, and made England's Queen, while the unhappy Jane Shore, bereft of all the splendour

splendor her guilt had gained her,
perished for want.

Yet, while you glory in your chastity, let it be in humble silence, not with the arrogance of self-approving virtue. Look with an eye of pity, compassion, and forgiveness, on all the unhappy part of your sex who have gone astray, and reflect if you had been like some of them, brought up under vile instructors, with no one to set you right, you might have been the same. By careful friends and protectors, with noble connexions, who, by their precepts and examples, set

fourth

forth before you the utmost purity of conduct, you are inexcuseable if you fall.

Queen Emma walked unhurt over red-hot plough-shares because she was chaste. May we not rather take this in a figurative sense, and believe that this ordeal trial meant nothing more? Emma was a woman of matchless beauty. The age, though barbarous, in which she lived, had nevertheless, a kind of gallantry in its manners; she therefore had many temptations, perhaps, to encounter, many solicitations to guard against. She was the
brightest

brightest star that then shone in England, consequently Princes and Nobles wooed her to their desires; but such was the chastity of her demeanour, she walked unhurt amidst the severest dangers.

You have often, when a few years younger than you are now, accompanied me to the Magdalen Chapel, and, while you admired the singing, have very sensibly asked me about the institution of the charity, and what the women were who sang, and why they were concealed from public view by blinds? I then evaded the question,

tion, which, I suppose, has since been resolved to you; if not, I now send it you.

They are poor unhappy women, who, weary of a life of guilt, are desirous of entering on a new course, and, by sincere penitence, washing out the stains of their former transgressions. It is a most glorious institution, and reflects immortal honour on the unfortunate man who was the founder of it! They are called Magdalens from the penitent Mary, who had been a famous courtesan in the court of Herod, and who, repenting of her

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former

MENTAL IMPROVEMENT. III

former crimes, cast herself at the feet of our Saviour, bathing them with her tears, and wiping them with her hair. She obtained forgiveness, and let us hope these poor unhappy Magdalens do the same; but, I have been told, they too often return to their former course of life: This certainly must be from their not meeting with sufficient charity and encouragement from the rigidly virtuous of their own sex! See the fatal consequences of the loss of virtue and reputation!

Oh! my dear niece, be careful and vigilant to preserve your honour:—

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Chastity, though not the only virtue our sex need possess, is the basis of all the rest; and feldom, very feldom, does a woman retain any other when she has violated that,

LETTER

LETTER V.

TRUTH.

LET me entreat you, my dear niece, ever to cherish in your breast the love of truth, and repel every species of dissimulation and falsehood. Keep your words and actions in that constant tenure of rectitude, that you may

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never have cause to deny the one,
or be ashamed of the other.

Falshood is the meanest and most
despicable vice we can be guilty of;
it reflects dishonour on all our other
actions, while truth sets them off, tho'
but mere trifles, and absolves even
those that were tinged with folly.

Was I blest with children, their
open confession of a fault would always
incline me to give, even without
remonstrating; there is an honesty so
persuasive in truth that dissipates anger
in an instant. You have been taught
never to deceive, but to let all your
actions

actions be open as the day; and, I trust, not one of the lessons your amiable mother gave you have been ever done away. We know not in what a field we engage, when once we encounter a falshood; we accumulate crimes on crimes, for never did one lie do alone; we are obliged to tell twenty more to support that:—Then think of the shame that follows, if we are discovered in them; our word in future is never to be believed; we are looked upon with an eye of jealousy and suspicion, and we fear ourselves again to open our lips, in conversation, to utter the strictest truths,

truths, lest we should be thought to be telling the greatest falsehoods.

Now there are various kinds of falsehoods, some which really do no harm in themselves, a kind of romancing, and adding most egregiously to a story, or some ridiculous actions or discourse you have been witness to: All this is extremely innocent; but I would by no means have you practise it: it will never make you a pleasant companion, but will gain you the title of a female satyrift, which is never reckoned agreeable. There is no excuse in the world for falsehood, except,
if

if I may so denominate it, a benevolent falsehood, that which can do no one harm, but may be a means of saving great anxiety and vexation to another, and of turning the scale much to their advantage, when, perhaps, the uttering the real truth might make them miserable through life.

This is certainly the only excuse that can be made for the giving ourselves leave ever to violate the truth; but, if we are very careful in the choice of our companions, this fault we shall be seldom led into.

If

If you would not utter a word with your lips, that made a lie, be very careful how you act one. Indeed, I know not which is worse, that which proceeds from the mouth, or any species of actual deceit. True it is, that "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh;" but I rather think the acting a lie is worse than the telling one, though it may not, perhaps be productive of such fatal consequences to others, as when proceeding from that unruly member, the tongue; yet the crime our conscience is charged with is greater; it is a double sort of deceit and meanness;

ness; like the Fable of the Farmer, who had hid the poor fox, and declared aloud to the huntsman he had seen nothing of him, at the same time winking, and pointing with his finger to the place in which poor Reynard lay concealed.

I once knew a young Lady, who had many amiable qualities, but was guilty of the silly and pernicious custom of laying *rouge* on her cheeks; at the same time she declared she abhorred a lie, nor do I know that she ever told one. But was she not guilty of actual falsehood, and did she not
commit

commit one every day? Avoid a custom, my dear niece, to which the present natural bloom on your cheek requires no such artificial assistance, and which is not only destructive to the health and complexion, but, in my opinion, faulty.

You admire the works of the greatest master of the exquisite art of painting, the immortal Reynolds! You admire the delicate touches of Wheatley! the beautiful colourings of Hamilton! and the bold designs and life-like figures of Opi and Rigaud! You handle the pencil yourself very prettily; but,

I think,

I think, you would never have the presumption to dare, by one touch of your colouring, to take your brush and endeavour to amend theirs: Be assured, then, it is much greater presumption, to foolishly imagine you can mend the work of the Great Master of Nature, who, when he formed you, knew what became you best.

Always utter the truth with noble firmness, and without fear. Let your hand never subscribe to falsehood, nor any action or look evince it; avoid every species of it, even in jest; it is right to abstain even from the shew of

H

wrong,

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wrong, though no harm is meant; others may be injured by it, and you brought into a habit of doing that, which once you never intended, on any account, to do.

There is a species of lying much in fashion, but against which I must beg to caution you; it is mean and ridiculous to the lowest degree? it is that of denying yourself to your company, that may chance to call on you at an inconvenient time. I cannot think, for my part, how any young Lady can do it; it certainly subjects her to many very disagreeable imputations.

Some

Some imagine the Lady, who does so, is afraid of being caught in *disbaille*, and, indeed, I fear, it is but too often the case. I knew a gentleman once, who would call over his staircase to the footman, after he had opened the street door to whoever had knocked, "I am not at home." He was an oddity to be sure; but there was a kind of truth in such bluntness, which, in some measure, justified the *soi disant* falsehood.

These are trifling foibles; they can come on the score of faults, and very uncharitable is that person who thinks them such; yet should we not, as far

as possible, aim at the great and glorious model—perfection? To attain it, then, let us conquer not only crimes but foibles; the latter, though no evil in themselves, are false and treacherous guides, that often betray and lead us to the former, and very difficult shall we find it to recede from them when once committed.

Perhaps (we will suppose the worst, for heaven grant my supposition may never be verified) you have been tempted by the deceitful opinion of keeping peace to your family, to practise a falshood, to extenuate some fault,
by

by the commission of which you knew you should displease them, and render them unhappy. You succeed; you are believed, and the world never is undeceived: But how is the monitor within? If it whispers applause to your conduct, and you hug yourself (to use a coarse expression) with delight at the imagination that all is safe, that no one knows your weakness, I will not scruple to pronounce your heart is bad, your conscience is hardened beyond redemption. If, on the contrary, after you have been betrayed by this false shame, for this is one of those treacherous guides I before men-

tioned, your nights are sleepless, your thoughts sorrowful, from the thorn in your bosom, there are then hopes from those sufferings, that you will never commit a crime again that has once cost you such inward pangs.

Human nature is frail; by constitution and habit a prey to various temptations; and where is the son or daughter of humanity that has not, in some degree, experienced them?—Even our virtue sometimes causes us to rush on the brink of vice: If then, my dear niece, you are, perhaps, tempted to the actual commission of a fault,

fault, with honest generosity let your parents know it; their forgiveness is sure to be the result, and the reward of your noble minded resolution—never to utter a falsehood; and let your every action and discourse through life prove, that you scorn so mean and despicable a vice. Let truth guide you, as it now guides my pen, when, I assure you, I am,

With the most sincere regard,

And esteem,

Your affectionate Aunt.

LETTER

LETTER VI.

EMPLOYMENT OF TIME.

NOW let me caution you, my dearest niece, against the fatal forerunner of every vice, against what may, indeed, be denominated a vice in itself, the destructive and baleful fault of idleness.

It is the source, the spring of all that is evil, the avenue to every other crime,

crime, and therefore it may justly be denominated the greatest sin in the world.

Nature formed us active beings, useful members of society; shall we then dare to revolt against her wise laws? No. Surely you will not be guilty of a fault that reflects so much dishonour on your family; for be assured, if you are idle, you will be the sole one in it who is so.

How does your worthy father employ himself in the few leisure hours he can spare from his ecclesiastical duties?

After

After he has composed his most excellent moral discourses, does he not handle the pencil? Is not his own dining parlour furnished with beautiful specimens of his skill? Did he not, in your younger days, employ himself in hearing you read, in learning to perform on the violin? And that, during your hours of practising your music, he might accompany you on that instrument? He therefore, you may presume, never allowed himself an idle moment; you are witness he does not now.

How does your charming mother
employ

employ her time? Did you ever see her idle? Did she not, if a leisure hour offered itself from the strict care she took of her household and beloved children, did she not fly to her harpsichord, and to the employing herself in works of skill and ingenuity? What has been the happy result of such noble perseverance? Are not their lives a series of virtue and content? They are virtues, because they never allow time for their thoughts to wander out of the path of rectitude, and in these employments they are happy and contented. What, though fortune may have blindly denied her gifts to them

them which she has bestowed on the undeserving, yet they know the true art of banishing many an uneasy thought, and the possession of this is more valuable than the nepenthe of Helen, so much celebrated by Homer.

Now, in the happy and elegant accomplishments you possess, be careful diligently to practise them all. After assisting your mother in her different domestic concerns, set apart one morning for reading, and writing letters to your different correspondents; for be sure you never incur the stigma of being a bad correspondent. Want
of

of time is too often the lame excuse some people make for this rude and shameful neglect, but it seldom makes amends for it. Great, indeed, must be your numerous avocations, if you cannot find half an hour, we will say an hour, to save a friend the mortifying reflection, that you neglect her, that you no longer love her. Admit that you are so very much taken up, it would do you no harm, a young Lady like you, in full health, to rise an hour or two earlier than your usual time, Be an earlier riser, or you will be ever denominated idle, and justly; your dear mother, within these few years,

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has

has been much more delicate in her health than formerly; and if, from little indispositions, she is sometimes unable to leave her pillow so soon as she would desire, that is no rule for you; therefore, if you have a few hours before breakfast, always employ them in the practising of music, or studying geography; you will find yourself then most adapted for those sciences.

Perhaps you will plead, you are so much taken up with company, with visiting, and paying those proper attentions to the numerous families you are

are allied to, that you have no time for study. I do not dispute it; but very few young Ladies are engaged of a morning; that time you may very justly call your own: It may, to be sure, so happen, that you may be out very early; for, though strict rule and order is the most agreeable thing in the world, yet no one expects you to lead a formal, rigid, austere life; that would be totally incompatible with the character of an amiable and endearing companion: But I speak only of your *leisure* hours, or the time, perhaps, that you may be in the country; only never suffer yourself, by any means,

to be one moment idle. I have told you how to employ one morning, and though I entreat of you never to fail practising your music once in a day, and it is well, when you know of no engagement, to let it be of an afternoon as any time; yet be sure allot one morning in the week entirely to the practice of this charming accomplishment. Another morning devote to drawing, another to work, and by no means neglect your embroidery; it is a work which will never be entirely out of fashion, now they have brought it to the perfection they have, at present so nearly approaching to nature.

nature. Be your own milliner too; you will find that œconomy highly necessary with your small fortune; and, as you have learned the fashionable art of making artificial flowers, shew your taste that way; and entreat of your parents to suffer you to cast up their bills, for it is very necessary to be a good accomptant; and if you are not so, you will never merit the title of an accomplished Lady; nor will you know how to regulate your household expences and family, whenever, or if ever, in the course of life you come to have one.

Divide one morning in the week between the study of geography, and the reading of voyages and travels, the one will naturally lead you to like the other, and make your memory retentive of both: And now I am writing on this subject, let me endeavour to point out to you what books I would have you read, and what I would warn you carefully to shun.

You have the comfort, I may say the blessing, of a most excellent library, and your father is the most hospitable man in the world, in regard to his books, for very few like to lend them ;

them; but he never denied any one a book in his life, so you have not the excuse of not being able to get them.

The HOLY SCRIPTURES are most certainly the great, the leading rule of conduct, written by the Spirit and Pen of Truth: But on these I shall not dwell any longer, they are already well recommended to you, and well explained.

The book next to them; indeed, the great Bishop Atterbury has not scrupled to pronounce it equal; setting
afide

afide the truths of the former, is the writings of Homer. But, as you do not understand Greek, I recommend to you Mr. Pope's translation of them: They are fraught with the most noble sentiments of piety, humanity, justice and compassion. Homer has, if I may use the expression, exhausted every beautiful sentiment, torn up nature by the roots, and all other writers that have been since, seem but a faint copy from the bright original.

Shakespeare! the immortal Shakespeare! may certainly be deemed the next great poet; for, notwithstanding

what

what I have said of Homer, Shakespere has many native thoughts and true touches of nature, which no one has been able to copy.

Milton, I reckon as a true copy of Homer; his writings are very sublime, and his Paradise Lost, which, though but too much imitated from the Iliad of Homer, is, nevertheless, a master piece, and has gained him the reputation of the greatest English poet.

The numbers of Pope are sweet—
his Essay on Man—his Universal
Prayer,

Prayer, and his Windsor Forest, are charming: But he was, as you will find, for I recommend his works to your perusal, no friend to our sex; as much I cannot esteem the man, though admire the poet; it was much beneath his wisdom to employ his pen in attacking female frailty.

I recommend the Sermons of Swift to you, but not his other works; they are vulgar, indelicate, and satiric; but his Sermons are very fine, one in particular, on the Trinity, is the most excellent and explicit that ever was
penned

penned on that great and mysterious subject.

Prior is, in many respects, extremely faulty; yet he was the friend of our sex, and as such I cannot avoid admiring him. I wish some of our modern compilers would take his sweet stories, his Nut Brown Maid, his Solomon, and some other of his beauties, and divest him of the trash with which he abounds; for it is so scattered in all his volumes, that, till it is removed by such a gleaning, I cannot recommend the reading his works to you.

Now

Now you will say, you did wrong, my dear aunt, to raise my curiosity in this manner. Your father perhaps, some winter evening, will read some of Prior's Beauties aloud to you, while you and Lady——are at work.

Before you study the history of other countries, be sure you are thoroughly versed in your own. Rapin will do very well in time, and perhaps, you have already began him; yet it is better at first to know well some abridgement, and that of Goldsmith is certainly the best; it is called the History of England, in a Series of Letters from

from a Nobleman to his Son, supposed
Lord Littleton.

It is very necessary, at your time of life, to mix the agreeable with the useful. Rapis is so dry and tedious, that, instead of making you fond of history, you will be disgusted with it though I believe him, without exception, the best historian of our country. He was a foreigner, and therefore wrote impartially of a country, whose manners, laws and government, he studied well, nor beheld them with the false glass of narrow prejudice.

Now, though I have recommended the history of your own country as the most essential to be studied first, yet there is a work you should peruse before the History of England, and that is also written by Goldsmith; it is the Commonwealth of Rome; You will there find how the Britons were first subdued by Julius Cæsar, and you will then continue the History of England with more pleasure; for the Romans were the people who civilized us, and drew us out of our pristine barbarity.

Dr. Fordyce's Sermons, and Mrs.
Chapone's

Chapone's Letters, are books particularly written to our sex. Let me entreat of you not to be without these charming monitors; form your conduct by them, and you cannot do amiss; at the same time read often over these letters: Though I step humbly after them, and never arrogantly presume to think my pen can equal theirs, yet it may imprint their lessons on your mind, and enforce what they have written before me.

Against the most pernicious reading in the world, against novels, let me particularly warn you; they poison

the mind, they soften and pervert the understanding, and infuse a kind of false heroic sentiment, while they divest you of that which is really pure and virtuous. Miss Burney's are the only writings of that kind you may peruse with safety, and which, indeed, I recommend to you. In her *Celicia* she has drawn the character of a truly amiable female, but not a woman of saint-like perfection. Her novels are entirely devoid of that romantic, enthusiastic ardour between the sexes, with which most of those writings abound, and which renders that sort
of

of reading so very pernicious and dangerous.

As to loose or immodest writing, I think, I may venture to say, I would warn you against the reading them, in the same manner as I would caution you against infringing the laws of sobriety, and hope the admonition was as unnecessary: A wretch, indeed, must that person be, who can sit coolly down, write wantonly, give his works with the same deliberation to his book seller, print them, publish them, to pervert the minds of a rising generation; but worse, much worse, is the

male, who can let her eye wander over them. Surely such a female does not now exist, at least among young Ladies, who have had the advantage of refinement, and virtuous education.

Many and cruel are the disadvantages some labour under; left to themselves at an early period of life, from either the loss or indigence of their parents, they know not what course to take, and the natural depravity of human nature leads them astray: Such, thank heaven, is not your lot.

Let

Let the letters you write to your correspondents, (and I hope to be reckoned in that class,) be written entirely from the heart, as they are never intended for the public eye. Let nature and truth guide your pen. Tautology is the greatest error; but a friend is very willing to overlook that, as it generally proceeds from an earnestness about some particular subject in your letter.

However good a geographer you may be, yet by no means be without Guthrie's Grammer; you will find it the most useful book of the kind to
look

look into now and then, if you find yourself at a loss; and few Ladies are so very perfect in this science, as not to be at a loss sometimes.

In your music, carefully practise the Italian, which is certainly the finest in the world; next to that the German; and the peculiar sweetness of the Scotch is such, that it should be by no means neglected; but French airs are never worth wasting the time in learning. The French music has been well compared, by one of that country, to the hobblings of a fat goose attempting to fly.

Though

Though you should by no means neglect the drawing of landscapes and figures, you be sure you frequently employ yourself in the drawing of natural flowers, as it will ever produce a fund of amusement which cannot wear off. Creation will furnish you with continual originals, which, tho' you can never reach the perfection of, you may endeavour to emulate.

Dancing, I can say but little of; for a good dance one five years, will be an indifferent one the next succeeding five years. Fashion here bears a prodigious sway; but I would have you acquire

acquire a graceful motion, without the studied airs of a dancing master, add, by regular attention, and mixing with the fashionable world, you will soon acquire the various changes of steps that may come into vogue, without taking lessons of every *Vestris*, or *Le Picq*, that may arrive from Paris. Lady —, your charming mother, always appears the graceful dancer.

The Italian language will, in two or three years more, be as universally spoken in England as the French is now, therefore, by all means, apply yourself well to it, and you will find
how

how great a help it will be to the acquiring that delightful language, to be a thorough mistress of the French. The Italian is the sweetest language in the world!

Yet, with all these various acquirements, if you are not thoroughly versed in English, you will be deemed a very insignificant smatterer; it will appear as if you were incapable of learning much. You will have no claim to the title of an accomplished woman, if not a thorough proficient in your own language.

Tho'

Tho' women are never intended for public readers, yet, by all means, I would advise you to endeavour to be an *excellent* reader. You know not how large the circle, or how many strangers to you, there may be in it, when, by accident, you may be called upon to read aloud; and, though it should be only a paragraph in a newspaper, it will very soon be discovered, by that small specimen, what sort of a reader you are.

You have, my dear girl, and know how, I beseech you, to value so great a blessing. You have continual means of improvement, and there lives not
the

the person, of any age, who has not those means. I will not say their advantages are all alike; but every one has it in their power to improve.

I know a gentleman, arrived to the middle state of life, who well knows, and practises this important lesson, endowed with strong natural powers, but having the misfortune of a narrow education, he could not make those powers shine forth with brilliancy; but, by dint of applying those talents, and studying to improve every hour of his life, and ever seeking the best companions, he is now a fit companion

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for

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for the wisest of the present age; his sons have received the polish of education, and will emerge into public life, and be, no doubt, an ornament to the succeeding generation. This is a laudable ambition; and I reckon it a greater honour to rank such a man among my friends, than I would any wealthy simpleton, who boasts his purple badge, and can trace back his leniage as far as William the conqueror, whose expensive education has been lost upon him; that pearl, that jewel of inestimable price, a good education, he has, perhaps, trampled under feet!

LETTER.

LETTER VII.

AMUSEMENTS.

I SAID much to you, my dear Charlotte, in a former letter, on the dangerous vice of idleness; yet be sure you never rush into the hazardous folly, of what is called killing time.

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Under this head may be ranked all kinds of gaming, idle visits, and the frequenting too much those public places of amusement, which, if well directed, and properly made use of, may be made most desirably recreative; while, by the constant use, and continually fluttering in the dangerous scene, they become nauseous and destructive.

For what were mental faculties given us, if not to amuse, as well as instruct? But instruction is a path which, sweetly winding, at length brings us to happiness. Amusement
has

has but one aim—that also is happiness; but she cannot attain it, and she oftener leaves distaste on the mind than pleasure, yet the mind must have relaxation. Let your pleasures, then, be elegant, and such as may please on reflection. Let your visits be to scenes of sickness and poverty, relieve as far as lies in your power, and the blessings of the poor and needy will be the sweetest music to your ears, far beyond what can be afforded you by all the Squallini's of the Opera, yet I do by no mean prohibit these amusements: No, if you are well versed in music, there is not a more

delightful entertainment than a good Opera, and which entertainment I wish you to partake, as often as is compatible with the character of an accomplished young Lady, not wholly given up to pleasure.

The Theatre, and managed as it is now, under the best regulations in the world, with respect to outward decency and regularity, is certainly a School of wisdom and Morality; yet there are pieces performed there, which do not set off the moral virtues in so bright a point of view as they ever ought to be regarded by young people;
for

for instance, the School for Scandal, though a most excellent piece, yet rather ridicules sentimental virtue, and applauds generosity before justice; which, though, perhaps to human sight, the most beautiful virtue of the two, yet certainly will not be applauded, if we do not first follow his example, who, though above all the kings and potentates of the earth, judged it right, and fully manifested it by his own conduct, to pay all lawful tribute and taxation.

The above reflections are, perhaps, rather wavering from the subject; yet,
if

if from every thing, however trifling, I can gain from it a few hints, to enforce the importance of sound morality on your young mind, I shall be entirely regardless of the remarks of any one, who may chuse to cavil at my numerous digressions.

This nation, arrived at the summit of taste, elegance and erudition, teems with every source of amusement adapted to all. Mechanism arrived at such an height, that one would almost imagine human nature could never attain unto, is exemplified in a public exhibition, which for a morning's recreation,

tion, you will find pleasant and agreeable. The enchanting wonder-working science of painting shines with peculiar brilliancy in the historic school of painting; and once in a year the Royal Academy gives us ample satisfaction, in displaying the skill of the various artists, and identifying to us, perhaps a few, among our numerous acquaintance, by the most masterly and well imitated portraits.

For evening amusements, Concerts, the Theatre, Vauxhall, and Ranelagh, all tasted in moderation, and without an inordinate desire after these places,

places, or any fullen sorrow, when disappointed of going to them, are all innocent recreations, and what every young Lady is at liberty to enjoy.— Indeed, it is necessary that the mind should sometimes be unbent by them; and where you keep a circle of elegant acquaintance, it is requisite to know how to converse on the subject of a new play, the success of an author, and the reputation his piece is likely to have with the public. Mark here, how much the attention I have required of you is to be regarded; without it, you will be able to do nothing, for, perhaps, the question may be put to
you,

you, of, “ How did you like such and such passages? At the representation of which, perhaps, you was flirting your fan, or with your Opera glass spying round the house, which actions there is always time enough for between the acts. Your saying you do not recollect, will immediately set you down, in the opinion of every one, to be very superficial in your accomplishments; and that you only go to see a new play, because it is the fashion.

That fickle goodness must be worshipped a little; but there ever will
be,

be, in every age, the wise and virtuous, who, though, to comply with custom, and because they would not be thought singular, who, though they pay the changeling some outward adoration, yet despise her in their hearts; and these will heartily deprecate you, if they see you a mere fashionist.

Study rather the amiable character of a rational, agreeable, woman.— Let every hour be employed, but not one destroyed; so will you be like the profitable servant, improving those talents your Lord and Master
has

has lent you, to restore them unto him ten-fold.

I am, as ever,

My dear niece,

Your's affectionately.

LETTER

M

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LETTER VIII.

RELIGION.

AS I intend this work, my dear Charlotte, as a companion for you, which you may take about with you without finding it an incumbrance, I conclude with this letter on the most important subject of all—
RELIGION!

My

My advice, you perceive, is not voluminous; but, I think, my dear niece, I have said as much to you in these few pages, as I could have done in as many volumes.

Without religion, all your attainments, all your high accomplishments, are no better than chaff! They serve but to shew you, how weak, how helpless, a creature you are, without Almighty aid! And thus regarded, you may make them a truly great and valuable acquisition.

Look up to that Being who created

you, with wonder, adoration, and gratitude! Think of the sacrifice of his only Son, and be not guilty of decide, by causing, through any sinful actions, his wounds to bleed afresh!

Unhappily our church is divided into many sectaries, idly disputing about trivial matters, while they agree in the most sacred points. They vainly argue about Free-will, Predestination, and Election, subjects about which, it is more than probable, they will yet remain in the dark; for who is he that can say, I know more than another of these wonderful ordinations, which

which will never be discovered “ till
“ time shall be no more.”

Do you, my dear Charlotte, adhere
to that Religion of your forefathers, in
which you have been instructed; it is
the most pure, the most coincident,
with the HOLY SCRIPTURES, and
most adapted to reason and common
sense, to say no more of it.

But though you gratefully adore
God for his bountiful Providence, in
admitting you, through Baptism, of the
Church of England, to walk in his
ways, and to tread the paths of pure
and undefiled Religion. Support not

your religious opinions with enthusiastic zeal. In this sacred pirtue, even in Religion as in every other, woman should veil all her actions with humility, modesty and diffidence; the short-lived flame that burns with vehemence, soon destroys itself. The mild benevolence of the Protestant Church feels no fanat-
cism.

Charity is its leading principle, which noble flame will ever induce us to think well of all Religions; there is something virtuous in them all; however dark or barbarous, they all teach mankind how helpless, how weak a being he is, bereft
of

of superior guidance! And few, very few, nations there are under the sun (I might be bold enough, I believe, to say there is not one) that has not some idea of a future state, where the virtuous will be rewarded, and where "sorrow and sighing will be done away."

And do you, my dear niece, so endeavour to fulfil the important duties assigned you in this life, that the blessed state, I have mentioned above, may be your lot. Emulate, as far as your frail nature will permit you, emulate that great and glorious model of perfection, "who went about doing

good," who, with melting pity and fervent charity, cheered the almost desponding sinner, who cast the spoils of her late voluptuous days at his feet, and comforted all such, by assuring them, that their penitence caused joy among those divine spirits, who dwell in the presence of the Almighty.

So, when the great and final day of retribution shall come, when all people shall be summoned before the GREAT JUDGE, from every corner of the earth, you may stand before that God, who, while justice holds the balance, permits mercy to turn the scale,

in

in humble confidence that, by your
 “visiting the fatherless and widows in
 their affliction, and keeping yourself
 unspotted from the sins of the world,”
 you may hear those comfortable words
 pronounced to your ears: “Come, ye
 blessed of my Father, inherit the
 kingdom prepared for you from the
 foundation of the world.”

Such is the sincere prayer,

My dear niece,

Of your very affectionate Aunt.

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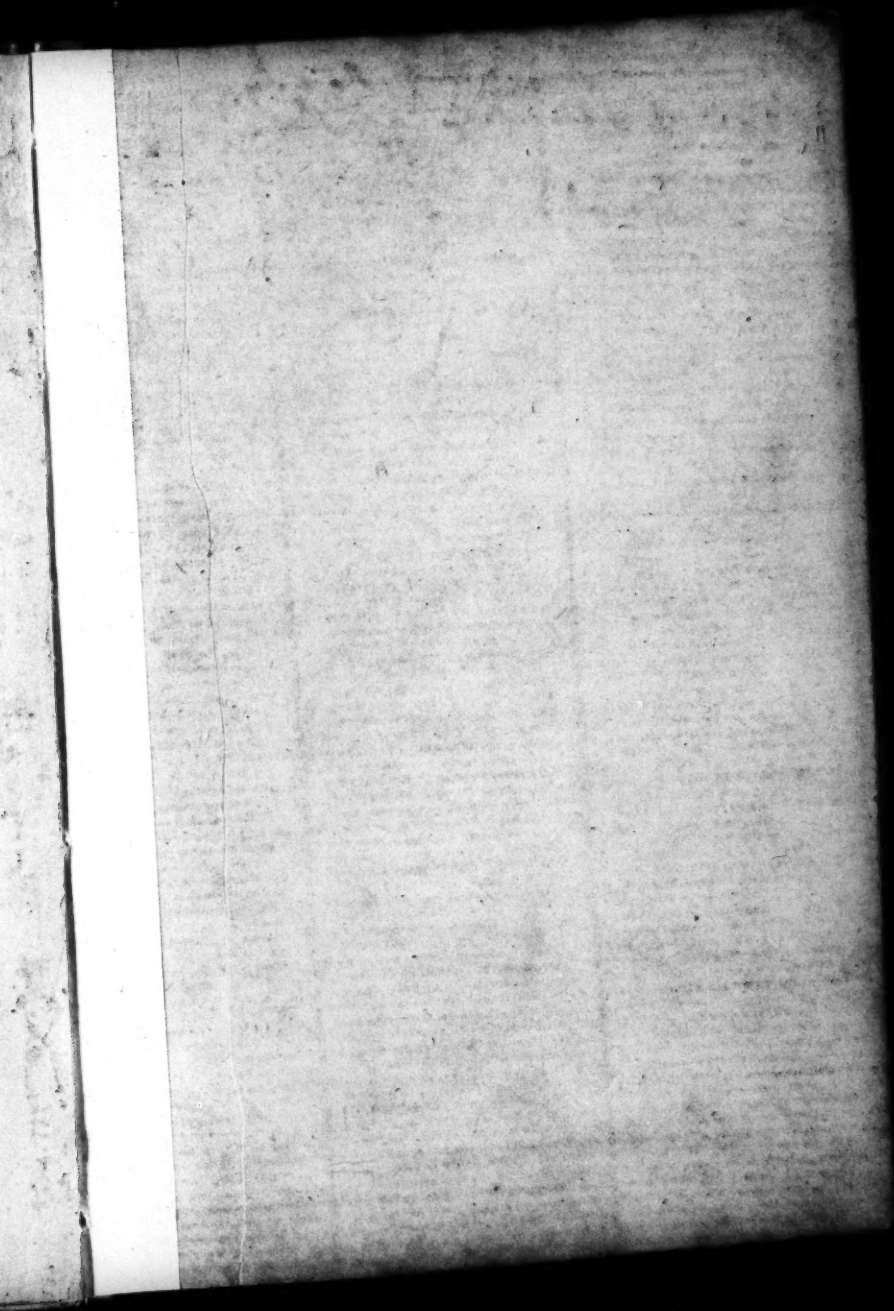
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